A JUST VINDICATION OF LEARNING, AND THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

By *Charles Blunt*, Esq.

LONDON,
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PROEM.

May it please you, my Lords and Gentlemen,

THis Session of Parliament is of such high Importance to these Parts of the World, that Heaven seems to have committed the Universal Fate of Christendom to Your disposal; from whose Proceedings, both France, Spain, Germany, Holland, and this part of the Universe, must take their Measures: Nor will it be a Vanity in me to affirm the same thing of You, which heretofore Tacitus did of the Batavi, 'Who in the time of the Romans (saith he) were able to confer a 'Victory upon whatever Party they adhered to.

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and for which purpoſe You are here Convened. You only are able to caſt out that Angel of Darkneſs, with his many Legions, who is at this time endeavouring to deſtroy our beſt of Kings and Governments: You only are able to Center this reeling Kingdom, which ſtaggers and groans under the Pluriſie of Popery, and which (if not now prevented) may in time attaint and corrupt the whole maſs of Engliſh *Blood: You only are able to preſerve that ſo neceſſary Religion, and Sacred Property of our* Britiſh *Iſle, by continuing as there now is) a Proteſtant Head, upon a Proteſtant Body; without which, our Prince would be no other than a Father-in-law to his People, and they Sons-in-law to him: beſides, the incoherence would be as great and diſagreeable, as to behold a black* Indian *Head, annex'd unto a white Body. Neither would ſuch a conjunction be more Unnatural, than Inconvenient, ſince He that is arbitrary over the Soul, as in Popery, hath ever a co-equal power over Body and the Eſtate; which is evident from the examples of* France, Spain, *and other Popiſh Governments, where the Prieſt rides the Soul,*

and

and the Prince the Body: (a Tyranny as diſagreeable to our Gracious Soveraign's Nature to impoſe upon us, as it would be inſupportable for our Engliſh *Spirits to bear.)*

Now the Original of theſe Popiſh Villanies (as I humbly conceive) proceeds not more from their Sacerdotal Malice and Intereſt, than from their Laicks Ignorance and Servitude; without which, their Clergy would at the beſt be rendred but like Wolves without Teeth. Wherefore to deveſt their Prieſts of this power of doing ill, nothing would be more conducive than the propagating of Wiſdom and Knowledge amongſt the populace; ſince as Ignorance renders men obedient and ſuſceptible of the meaneſt Slavery, ſo doth its contrary put all men upon their Guard: Omnes enim nos ſumus, aut corvi qui lacerant, aut cadavera quæ lacerantur. *Now for the more ſpeedy effecting hereof, there hath never been diſcover'd any better expedient amongſt men, than that of the* Liberty of the Preſs, *whereby whoever oppoſe the Publick Intereſt, are expoſed and rendred odious to the people: as on the contrary, they who*

merit well of their Country, are ever recorded with Immortal Honour to Posterity. So that if Fame and Ambition (as all generous Souls must acknowledge) have so great an influence over the Minds of active men, what can be more reasonable, what can be more serviceable to the World, than that which hurries men into a necessity of acting Virtuously, or of forfeiting their so-much-desired Honour for ever? and such I take to be the consequence of a Free Press. *From which consideration, since the late Act which laid that severe restraint upon* Printing, *is so near Expiring, my humble Address to Your Lordships, and to You Gentlemen of the House of Commons, is, that before You proceed to the Continuation of any thing of that Nature, You would condescend so far as to look down upon these ensuing Arguments, against any such Inquisition or Embargo upon Science, wherein You may happily find some Reasons, which (though not founded upon private ends, like those of our Adversaries) may yet prove sufficiently satisfactory to all, but that* Dead-weight *of Interest which opposeth us; and will not be converted, for that it is not for its Interest so to be.*

This,

This, My Lords and Gentlemen, is all from him who would Sacrifice his Life and Fortune for his King and Country, coveting no other Title of Honour whereby to be distinguished, than that of

Philopatris.

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ALL Civilized People, as well Ancient as Modern, have ever had that veneration and deference for Learning, that almost no Nation, disengaged from Barbarism, wants its publick Donations, either of Magnificent Structures, or plentiful Revenues, for the Encouragement of Literature and Learned Men. Such Patrons and Admirers of Learning were the *Heroes* of old, that they seem to

contend about nothing more, than to excel in their Liberality to the *Muſes*: Thus we ſee *Alexander* the Great preſented *Ariſtotle* with 8000 Talents, as alſo *Xenocrates* the Philoſopher with 50 Talents; *Antiochus* likewiſe preſented his Phyſician *Theombrotus* with 60000 Crowns; *Homer* for his Works receiv'd a Thouſand Pieces of Silver from the *Candiots*; nor did that ſuffice, but Cities muſt fall together by the Ears for the Honour of his Birth: So liberal were the Ancients to all manner of Science; nor have our Modern Benefactors been inferior to them, as our two famous Univerſities may teſtifie to Poſterity. Yet notwithſtanding all theſe Encouragements, Learning hath of late Years met with an Obſtruction in many Places, which ſuppreſſes it from flouriſhing or increaſing, in ſpight of all its other helps, and that is the *Inquiſition upon the Preſs*, which prohibits any Book from coming forth without an *Imprimatur*; an old Relique of Popery, only neceſſary for the concealing of ſuch defects of Government, which of right ought to be diſcover'd and amended. However, as our Government is not ſick of the ſame Diſtemper, ſo need we not the ſame Cure, but rather the contrary: For as an ill Face cannot be too cloſely maſqued, ſo neither can a good one be too much expoſed.

Plut. vita Alex.

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That Books are of great uſe to a Government, is evident, Firſt, For that they are the only Records of Time, which excite us to imitate the paſt Glories of our Anceſtors. Secondly, We owe our manner or form of Divine Worſhip to Books alone. Thirdly, We owe our Philoſophy or Contemplation of God in his Works, to the ſame Cauſe. For Mens Natural Abilities, like Natural Plants, need pruning by Study: Thus we ſee that Hiſtories make Men wiſe; Poets, witty; Mathematicks, ſubtle; Natural Philoſophy, deep; Moral Philoſophy, grave; Logick and Rhetorick, able to diſpute; all which Excellencies are to be acquired only from Books; ſince no Vocal Learning is ſo effectual for Inſtruction, as Reading; for that written Diſcouſes are better digeſted, and ſupport themſelves better on their own weight, than Words diſguiſed by the manner of Expreſſion, cadence or geſture, which corrupt the ſimplicity of things; when alſo the ſuddenneſs of Pronunciation allows not the Audience time ſufficient to reflect upon what was ſaid. Moreover, Books flatter much leſs, and have more univerſal Precepts, than Diſcourſe; which generally affects Complaiſance, and gaining the Hearers good will: Particularly in Morality, where great Perſons are better inſtructed, and more plainly reprehended for their Faults by Books, than by Diſcourſes. Books being therefore in the main

main so useful to Human Society, I cannot but herein agree with Mr. *Milton*, and say, that (unless it be effected with great Caution) you had almost as good kill a Man, as a good Book; for he that kills a Man, kills but a Reasonable Creature, God's Image: whereas he that destroys a good Book, kills Reason it self, which is as it were the very Eye of God.

Having thus demonstrated how much the World owes to Learning and Books, let me not be altogether unmindful of *Faust* and *Guttenburg*, the promoters of both; who by their Ingenuity discovered and made known to the World, that Profound Art of Printing, which hath made Learning not only Easie, but Cheap; since now, any Person may accommodate himself with a good moderate Library, at the same Price, as heretofore *Plato* paved for Three Books of *Philolaus* the *Pythagorean*, viz. Three Hundred Pounds. This was the Invention wherewith *Cardan* upbraided the Ancients, saying, *Antiquitas nihil par habet*. Nay, *Thuanus* goes higher, when speaking of the Inventors of this Art, he saith, *Quibus plus debet Christianus orbis, quàm cuiquam fortissimorum belli ducum ob propagatos fines patria unquam debuit.* And truly so we do; but still provided,

Gell. *lib.* 5. *cb.* 17.

Subt. *lib.* 17.

Hist. *lib.* 25.

provided, that the Inquiſition upon it be removed, without which, this Art deſign'd at firſt for the Service of the Publick, will prove uſeful to none but the Licenſer. Therefore in oppoſition to any ſuch Reſtraint, I ſhall here demonſtrate the unreaſonableneſs of any ſuch Licenſe or *Imprimatur*.

1. From the Ancient uſage as well of the *Greeks* as *Romans*, who were both highly eminent for Learning, and whom in this particular we need not be aſhamed to imitate: We do not find amongſt the *Greeks*, that their *Vetus Comædia* (which was ſo much cenſured for Libelling and Traducing Men by Name, as to be prohibited Acting on the Stage) was ever ſuppreſt from being read, but rather the contrary; for that *Plato* himſelf recommended the Reading of *Ariſtophanes* (the looſeſt of all thoſe old Comædians) to his Royal Scholar *Dionyſius*. Neither do we read any where, that either *Epicurus* or that Libertine School of *Cyrene*, or what the *Cynick* Impudence utter'd, with many other Sects and Opinions, which tended to Voluptuouſneſs, and the denying of a Providence, were ever prohibited or queſtion'd. Alſo amongſt the *Latines*, we find *Lucretius* verſifying his *Epicurean* Tenents to *Memmius*, without any moleſtation, and had the honour to be publiſhed a ſecond time by *Cicero*, the great Father of the Commonwealth, although he himſelf diſputes againſt

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that ſame Opinion in his own Writings. Neither do we read of any Decree againſt the Satyrical ſharpneſs of *Lucilius*, *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*. Likewiſe in matters of State, the Story of *Titus Livius*, though it extoll'd and magnify'd *Pompey's* Party, was not therefore ſuppreſs'd by *Octavius Cæſar*, of the other Faction. Nay, even in the times of Chriſtianity, unleſs they were plain Invectives againſt Chriſtianity, as thoſe of *Porphyrius* and *Proclus*, they met with no interdict till about the Year 400, in a *Carthaginian* Council, wherein Biſhops themſelves were forbid to read the Books of *Gentiles*, but Hereſies they might read: Whereas others long before them, ſcrupled more the Books of Hereticks, than of *Gentiles*. And that the Primitive Councils and Biſhops were uſed only to declare what Books were not commendable, paſſing no further Cenſure, but leaving to each ones Conſcience to read, or to lay by, till after the Year 800, is already obſerved by Father *Paul*, that great unmasker of the *Tridentine Council*: After which time, the unſatiable Popes engroſſed more and more every day, till *Martin* the 5*th* by his Bull, not only prohibited, but was the firſt that Excommunicated the Reading of Hæretical Books: For about that time, *Wicklif* and *Huſs* growing formidable, were they who firſt drove the Papal Court to a ſtricter policy of prohibiting: Which Courſe, *Leo* the Tenth,

Tenth, and his Succeſſors followed, until the Council of *Trent* and the *Spaniſh* Inquiſition engendring together, produced theſe Two Monſters, an *Index Expurgatorius*, and a *Licenſer*: When they enacted, that no Book, Pamphlet, or Paper ſhould be Printed, till it were Approved and Licenſed under the hands of Two or Three Gluttonous Fryers: So that in fine, there was never any ſuch Inquiſition upon Learning known in the World, till *Slavery ſupplanted Liberty, and Intereſt Religion*.

2. It is the greateſt Affront and Diſcouragement that can be offer'd to Learning and Learned Men: For ſo far to diſtruſt the Judgment and Honeſty of one who hath but a common repute in Learning, (having never yet offended) as not to count him fit to Print his Mind, without a Tutor or Examiner, leſt he ſhould drop a Schiſm of Corruption, is the greateſt diſpleaſure and indignity to a free and knowing Spirit, that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a Man, over it is to be a Boy at School, if we have only ſcap'd the Ferula, to come under the Feſcu of an *Imprimatur*? When a Man writes to the World, he ſummons up all his Reaſon and Deliberation to aſſiſt him; he Searches, Meditates, is induſtrious in Conſulting and Conferring with his Judicious Friends; after all which, he

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takes himself to be inform'd in what he writes, as well as any that writ before; if in this the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his Abilities, can bring him to the state of Maturity, as not to be still distrusted, unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight Watchings and Expence of *Palladian* Oyl, to the hasty view of an *Unlesured Licenser*, perhaps much his Younger, perhaps much his Inferior in Judgment, perhaps one who never knew the Labour of Book-writing, or perhaps one altogether ignorant of that Art or Science whereof the Author treats. When if he be not repuls'd or slighted, must appear in Print like a Puny with his Guardian, and his Censor's Hand on the back of his Title, to be his Bail and Surety that he is no Idiot or Seducer: This cannot but be a derogation to the Author and to the Book, as well as to the privilege and dignity of Learning. And what if the Author shall be of so Copious a Fancy, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his Mind after Licensing, while the Book is yet under the Press, which frequently happens even to the best of Writers, and that perhaps a Dozen times in one Book? The Printer dares not go beyond his Licensed Copy; so often then must the Author trudge to his Leave-

giver,

giver, that thoſe his new Inſertions may be view'd; and many a Journey will he make 'ere that *Licenſer*, (for it muſt be the ſame Man,) can either be found, or be found at Leiſure; in the mean while, either the Preſs muſt ſtand ſtill, which is no ſmall Damage, or the Author loſe his moſt Correct Thoughts, and ſo ſend forth his Book Imperfect. How can any Man eſteem himſelf Doctor enough to teach with Authority in his own Book, when he himſelf and all that he Writes muſt ſubmit to the juriſdiction and cenſure of another?

3. 'Tis a great prejudice even to the Book it ſelf, to come out under the partiality and ignorant approbation of a *Licenſer*: Every Acute Reader upon the firſt ſight of a Pedantick *Licenſe*, will be apt to miſinterpret the Word (*Imprimatur*) and think it ſignifies no more, but that this Book is fooliſh enough to be Printed; when ſeeing it comes out under the wardſhip of another, he will be apt to ſay, I know nothing of the *Licenſe*, but that I have his own Hand for his Arrogance; who ſhall warrant me his Judgment? The State, Sir, replies the *Stationer*: But hath a quick return, The State ſhall be my Governours, but not my Criticks; they may be miſtaken in the choice of a *Licenſer*, as eaſily as this *Licenſer*, in the choice of an Author: Whereunto he might alſo add from my

my Lord *Bacon*, *That such Authorized Books are but the Language of the Times.* For though a *Licenser* should happen to be more than ordinary Judicious, which will be a great hazard in the next Succession; yet his very Office and Commission enjoyns him to let pass nothing but what is vulgarly received already. Nay, if the work of any Deceased Author, though never so Famous in his Lifetime, come to their hand for License to be Printed or Reprinted; if there be found in the Book any one Opinion that thwarts the *Licenser*'s Humour, whether it be of a Vacuum, Motion, Air, or never so inconsiderable a Subject; the Sense of that great Man shall to all Posterity be lost, out of the presumptuous Rashness of a pedantick *Licenser*. So that if these things be not seriously and timely resented by them who have the Remedy in their power; but that *Licensers* are permitted to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisite Books, and to commit such a Treacherous Fraud against the Orphan remainders of the Worthiest Men after Death, the more Sorrow will belong to that helpless Race of Men, whose Misfortune it is to have Understanding. Henceforth let no Man care to learn, or care to be more Worldly Wise; for certainly, in higher matters to be Ignorant and Sloathful, to be a common stedfast Dunce, will be

be the only pleaſant Life, and only in requeſt.

4. It is not only a reflection upon Books and particular Men, but it is likewiſe an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole Nation: I cannot ſet ſo ſmall value for all the Invention, the Art, the Wit, the grave and ſolid Judgment which is in *England*, as to imagine that it can be comprehended in any Twenty Capacities, how good ſoever, much leſs that it ſhould not paſs except their Superintendence be over it, except it be ſifted and ſtrained with their Strainers, and that it ſhould be uncurrent without their Manual Stamp: Truth and Underſtanding are not ſuch Wares as to be Monopolized and Traded in Tickets, Statutes and Standards. We muſt not think to make a Staple Commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to Mark and Licenſe it like our Broad-cloth and Wool-packs: What is it but a Servitude, like that impoſed by the *Philiſtines*, not to be allow'd the ſharpening of our own Axes, but we muſt repair from all Quarters to Twenty Licenſing Forges? Had any one written or divulged erroneous things, and ſcandalous to an Honeſt Life, miſuſing and forfeiting the Eſteem had of his Reaſon amongſt Men; if after Conviction, this only Cenſure were adjudged him, that he ſhould never henceforth write but under the Autho-

Authority of an Examiner; this could not be apprehended leſs than a diſgraceful Puniſhment. Whence, to include the whole Nation, and thoſe that never yet thus offended, under ſuch a diffident and ſuſpectful Prohibition, renders it no leſs than a National Diſparagement; and ſo much the more, ſeeing Debtors and Delinquents may walk abroad without a Keeper, but inoffenſive Books muſt not ſtir forth without a viſible Jaylor in their Title: Nor is it a leſs Reproach to the Commonalty; ſince, if we be jealous over them, as that we dare not truſt them with an *Engliſh* Pamphlet; what do we but cenſure them for a giddy, vicious, unthinking crowd; in ſuch a ſick eſtate of Diſcretion, as to be able to take nothing down, but through the Pipe of a *Licenſer*. Now that this proceeds from the care or love of the Commonalty, we cannot pretend; ſince in thoſe Popiſh Places where the Laity are moſt hated and deſpiſed, the ſame ſtrictneſs and ſeverity is uſed over them.

5. It reflects upon our Church and Clergy, of whoſe Labours we ſhould hope better, and of the proficiency which their Flock reaps by them; than after all this Light of the Goſpel, all this continual Preaching, they ſhould be ſtill frequented with ſuch an un-principled, un-edify'd and Laick Rabble,

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as that the Whiff of every new Pamphlet ſhould ſtagger them out of their Catechiſm and Chriſtian walking. This may have much reaſon to ſtagger and to diſcourage the Miniſters, when ſuch a low Conceit is had of all their Exhortations, and the benefiting of their Hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned looſe to Three Sheets of Paper, without a Licenſe; that all the Sermons, all the Lectures Preached, Printed and vented in ſuch Numbers and ſuch Volumes, ſhould not be Armour ſufficient againſt one ſingle Enchiridion Unlicenſed: I am confident that a Kingdom governed by the Rules of Juſtice and Fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the Rock of Faith and true Knowledge, cannot be ſo Puſillanimous. That all freedom of Writing ſhould be thus reſtrained with the proud curb of an *Imprimatur*, muſt needs adminiſter cauſe of doubt and diſcouragement to all Learned and Religious Men, who may juſtly ſuſpect the Reaſon and Power of that cauſe which durſt not ſtand a Tryal of Skill. Every Author writes either Truth or Falſhood; if he writes Truth, why ſhould he be oppreſſed or ſtifled? And if he delivers what is Falſe, let him be confuted by Anſwer, whereunto every Author is ſubject; ſince no Cauſe ever ſuffered by being anſwered, only by Fire and Faggot. That Liberty

berty is the Nurſery of Science, appears in that there is nothing hath ſo much clouded and diſcouraged the *Italian* Wits, as their *Inquiſition*; which reſtraining all manner of Philoſophick freedom, hath for theſe many Years produced nothing but obſequious flattery: In which Country the Famous *Galileo* was oppreſſed under the *Inquiſition*'s Tyranny, for thinking otherwiſe in Aſtronomy, than the *Dominican* and *Franciſcan* Licenſers thought.

6. This Licenſing of Books, is one of the moſt dangerous and miſchievous Monopolies and Oppreſſions our Government is ſubject to: Since, put the Caſe we were under an Evil Prince, (as now we are under a Good one) he paying his *Licenſer* his Stipend, might influence him ſo far, as to make him Licenſe all Books againſt the Intereſt of the Subject, or to the Defamation of any publick Spirited Lords or Commoners; and to prohibit only ſuch Books as are in the Vindication of ſuch Perſons who are for the Liberty and Property of the Subject: For that 'tis ever the Intereſt of a *Licenſer*, above all, to regard the Favour of his Prince, (though to the prejudice and almoſt ruine of his Country.) Who pays him his Wages? His Prince. Who hath the Diſpoſal of all Places and Offices of Preferment? His Prince. Then who ſhould he

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ſtudy to pleaſe, right or wrong, but his Prince and Pay-maſter? that is, if he be ſuch as moſt *Licenſer*'s are, low-ſpirited Men, who conſider nothing but their preſent Intereſt. Why ſhould not I have the ſame freedom to Write, as to ſpeak? If I ſpeak any thing that is evil, I am liable to be puniſhed, but yet I am never examined before I ſpeak what I am about to ſay: So let not my Book be cenſured by one Intereſted Man alone in private, till it hath tried the publick Teſt; and then if there be any thing ill in it, I am ready to anſwer for it. Why muſt no Writing, either in the behalf of ſuch great matters, as Liberty, Property, and Religion, or in the behalf of ſuch ſmall Trifles, as Funeral Tickets, Play-houſe Bills, City Mercuries, Hackney-Coach Bills, Quack-Doctors Bills, and the like, be Printed without a Licenſe? Is it for that the Subject of theſe Bills or Tickets are dangerous to the Government? or rather, that this Monopoly would be injured in its Prerogative, if the leaſt Word or Letter be Printed without paying Toll to this *Licenſer*. Heaven grant, that in time, there be not the ſame Reſtraint and Monopoly over Witty Diſcourſe, as there is now over Ingenious Writing: Since by the ſame Reaſon, the Royal Jeſter may demand a Spell of Money for every Jeſt that is broken in Diſcourſe, as well as the *Li-*

cenſer

cenſer doth expect a Reward for every Ingenious Piece or Jeſt, that is Printed in Books: When with more Gravity than Wit, having with great Study and Labour Corrected ſome ſuch dangerous Author as *Thomas à Thumbis*; he from his Learned Grammatical Pen, which caſts no Ink without *Latin*, drops forth that Lordly Word *IMPRIMATUR*; either becauſe he judged no Vulgar Tongue was worthy to expreſs ſo pure a Conceit, or rather perhaps, for that our *Engliſh*, (the Language of Men, ever famous and bold in the Atcheivements of Liberty,) will not eaſily find ſervile Letters enough to ſpell ſuch an Arbitrary Preſumptuous Word, as is that of *IMPRIMATUR*.

7. This trouble of Licenſing doth very much prejudice and injure the very *Licenſers* themſelves in the Calling of their Miniſtry, if they will diſcharge that Office as they ought; becauſe of neceſſity they muſt neglect either the one Duty or the other.

8. It robs us of that great Argument we make uſe of againſt the *Mahometans*; and what is worſe, Popiſh Religion, *viz.* That Ignorance is the Mother of their Devotions; ſince how can we juſtly brand their Religions, for being founded meerly upon their Laicks Ignorance; when we in the like manner

ner diſcountenance knowledge our ſelves? How can we upbraid Papiſts for not daring to permit their Common People to read the Bible, when we do the ſame thing in effect, by tying all Perſons up to one Man's Expoſition and Interpretation of the ſame, *viz.* the *Licenſer's*, who will not permit any Expoſition to come forth that thwarts his own particular Judgment. I am confident, that if the *Turk* or the *Pope*, could be aſſured to make all Men Expound the *Alcoran* and Scriptures, according to the ſenſe of the *Muſti* and *Conclave*, they would neither of them be againſt the Common Peoples reading them; ſo that we all Three aim at one and the ſame thing, only by different ways; and that is our miſtake: For let their falſhoods uſe what artifice they can; yet we do in a manner Libel our own Truth, when by Licenſing and Prohibiting, fearing each Book, and the ſhaking of each Leaf, we diſtruſt her own ſtrength: Let her and Falſhood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worſt in a free and open Encounter? Her confuting is the beſt and ſureſt oppreſſing, when it leaves all ſtanders-by no room to doubt. *The puniſhing of Wits, enhaunces their Authority, and forbidden Writing is thought to be a certain Spark of Truth, that flies up in the Faces of them who ſeek to tread it out.* When a Man hath been Lord *Bacon.*

working at the hardeſt Labour in the deep Mines of Knowledge, and hath furniſh'd himſelf out in all Equipage, drawn forth his Reaſons as it were in Battel-array; ſcatter'd and defeated all Objections in his way, ſummons his Adverſary into the Field, offers him the advantage of Wind and Sun, if he pleaſes, only that he might try the matter by dint of Argument; for his Opponent then to ſculk and lie in Ambuſcade, to keep a narrow Bridge of Licenſing, where the Challenger ſhould paſs; this, though it be courage enough in a Souldier, is but Weakneſs and Cowardice in the Wars of Truth. For Truth needs no Policies, no Strategems, no Licenſings to render her Victorious; theſe are only the ſhifts and defences that Error uſes againſt her power: So that if it once come to Prohibiting, there is nothing more likely to be Prohibited than Truth it ſelf, even the very Bible; as we may ſee it is by the firſt Inventors of this Monopoly. To juſtifie the Suppreſſion of Books, ſome may Cite the Burning of thoſe *Epheſian* Books by St. *Paul*'s Converts; but that agrees not with our Caſe, for there it was not the Magiſtrate, but the Owners of the Books themſelves, who burnt them in remorſe.

9 And Laſtly, Give me leave to tell you, that Licenſing and Perſecution of Conſcience are Two Sifters, that ever go hand in hand together, being both founded upon

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one and the ſame Principle: Therefore to Aſperſe the one, permit me to Defame the other. Now, although I allow no defference to thoſe Religions whoſe Principles deſtroy Government, nor thoſe Religions that teach ill Life (both which Errors the Papiſts are guilty of) *Yet I cannot but wiſh, that all Men would uſe one another ſo gently and ſo charitably, that no violent Compulſion ſhould introduce Hypocriſy, and render Sincerity as well troubleſome as unſafe.* It would be hard meaſure for any Man to blame that Chyrurgion who refuſed to cut off a Man's Head, only to cure a Wart or Pimple upon his Chin or Cheek: Now the Caſe is altogether the ſame, and we may as well decree a Wart to be Mortal, as a various Opinion in *re alioqui non neceſſariâ* to be Capital and Damnable. I would fain know why is not any Vicious Habit as bad or worſe than a Falſe Opinion? Why are we ſo zealous againſt thoſe we call Non conformiſts, or Hereticks, and yet at the ſame time dear Friends with Drunkards, Fornicators, Swearers, Intemperate and Idle Perſons? I am certain that a Drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the Laws of Chriſtianity, as any Heretick; and I am alſo ſure that I know what Drunkenneſs is, but I am not ſure that ſuch an Opinion is Hereſie, nor would any Man elſe be ſo dogmatical in theſe matters, did he not miſtake confidence.

for certainty. Faction and Hereſie were things unknown in the World, till the increaſe of Intereſt, and abatement of Chriſtian Simplicity; when the Church's Fortune grew better, her Sons worſe, and her Fathers worſt of all. Why ſhould I hate Men becauſe their Underſtandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the ſame Maſters, have not met with the ſame Books, nor the ſame Company, or have not the ſame Intereſt, or are not ſo Wiſe, or are much Wiſer, and therefore do not determine their School queſtions to the ſenſe of my Sect or Intereſt? I think they are in an Error, but they believe me to be in the wrong; if they Err, they do it not through Obſtinacy, but Ignorance; and if God affords them his Patience, why ſhould we not lend them ours? It was nobly and bravely anſwered (for a Heathen) of *Tamberlain* the Great, who (when his High-Prieſt deſired him to reduce all that part of the World to one Religion) replyed: *No, I will not; for that how* (ſaith he) *do I know but the ſame God, who hath delighted himſelf ſo much with the variety of all other things, as appears in Men, Beaſts, Birds, Fiſh, Trees, Herbs, Flowers*, &c. *may not alſo delight himſelf as much in variety of Worſhip? Therefore I will puniſh none but ſuch as deny either a God or his Providence, and him will I put to Death.* Certainly 'tis very unreaſonable for Men to preſs and pretend

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every Opinion in Matters of Religion, as neceſſary in ſo high a degree, that if they ſpoke Truth, or indeed Two of them in 500 Sects, which are now in the World, (and for ought I know there may be 5000.) it is 500 to one but every Man is Damn'd; for every Sect Damns all but it ſelf, and yet that is Damn'd of 499. and it is excellent Fortune then if that eſcape. All Wiſe Princes heretofore, till they were overborn with Faction, gave Toleration to different Sects, whoſe Opinions did not diſturb the publick Intereſt: And not without reaſon; for that being reſtrained and made miſerable, mutually endears the diſcontented Party, and ſo begets more hearty and dangerous Confederations againſt the oppreſſing Government.

Now how unreaſonable ſoever ſuch kind of Perſecutions may appear to all tender-hearted Chriſtians; yet if once a Licenſe prevails (when Men ſhall not be permitted to juſtifie their Innocence to the World, 'tis greatly to be fear'd that theſe Miſchiefs, and worſe than theſe (if poſſible) will be the conſequence of it. Having therefore thus plainly and at large demonſtrated the inconveniences of a Licenſing Preſs, give me leave to write upon the ſquare, and ſhew you the Objections of our Adverſaries, which without wrong to their cauſe, may be juſtly comprehended under one Head, and that is this.

Objection, If (ſay they) a Reſtraint be not laid upon Printing, and ſome Superviſors aſſigned over the Preſs; how then can we be ſecured from Libels againſt the King, the Church, the State and Private Men? As alſo from Popiſh Books of all ſorts? Now this I take to be the only Material Objection, wherewith they can have any ſhew of a pretence to baffle and obſtruct our deſign.

To which I *Anſwer*: Firſt, That to expect any aſſurance that no ſuch Books ſhall be written, is more than Mortal Man can give, ſince we ſee, that during this late Act, and ſhould there be even a *Spaniſh* Inquiſition erected amongſt us; yet there are ſome Authors and ſome Printers ſo bold, that the one to vent his Humour, and the other for the Lucre of Money, would Write and Print ſuch Books, in ſpite of the ſtricteſt enquiry, and in defiance of the ſevereſt Penalty; and theſe are the Authors that are moſt dangerous, and alſo moſt incorrigible, being Perſons however that are more likely to be ſilenc'd by Liberty than by reſtraint: For experience hath already ſhew'd, that all ſuch Acts will prove uneffectual as to them. Secondly, ſuppoſing any ſuch Authors are taken and diſcovered; why, we need no other new Laws for the puniſhing of them (as I humbly conceive) than what are already in force: As for example, if any Audacious Villain ſhall Publiſh Treaſon, he is already liable to

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ſuffer as a Traytor; or if he Writes Scandalous Reflections upon the Government, I preſume he is by the preſent Laws of the Land ſubject to a Fine and Impriſonment. Again, if he publiſhes any Atheiſm, Hereſie or Schiſm, he is liable to an Excommunication, and to be proceeded againſt accordingly in the Spiritual Court: Or if in his Writing he defames any particular Perſon, he is obnoxious to a *Scandalum Magnatum*, if he be a Peer, and to an Action upon the Caſe for Slander, if he be a Commoner. And laſt of all for Popiſh Books, *Quære* whether there be not *Statutes* already in force for the aboliſhing them, made 3 and 4 of *Ed. 6.* For although this *Statute* was once repealed by the 1 *M.* 2. yet that of the 1 *M.* 2. was likewiſe afterwards repealed by the 1 *Jac.* 28. So that I cannot apprehend wherein we have need of any other new Law of this Nature, unleſs it be to preſerve to the poor Book-ſellers their juſt and undoubted property of their Copies, which is their Houſe and Land, they having the ſame Title for the one, as we have for the other.

Poſtſcript.

Poſtſcript.

HAving thus therefore, my Lords and Gentlemen tender'd to your ſerious conſideration theſe few Reaſons againſt any ſuch Inquiſition upon the Preſs, I ſhall preſume to offer but this one Propoſal to your Judgment, and ſo conclude, viz. *That if theſe fore-mentioned Arguments prove ſo uneffectual, as that your Prudence ſhall think fit to take ſome further care about the regulating of the Preſs; then if it be Enacted, that any Book may be Printed without a Licenſe, provided that the Printer's and the Author's Name, or at leaſt the Printer's be Regiſtred, whether or no this will not have all the good, but none of the bad Conſequence of a* Licenſer? *And that thoſe which otherwiſe come forth, if they be found Miſchievous and Libellous, ſhall be committed to the Flames, as alſo the Author to Condigne Puniſhment; but in this as in all other things, I humbly ſubmit my ſelf to your Supream Wiſdom and Judicature.*

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN K. *W* and the late K. *J*. ON THE Banks of the *BOYN*, the Day before the Battel.

K. *J*. IF injur'd Monarchs may their Cauſe explore,
An Uncle's, and a Father's Right is more.
Nature here pleads, your Blood is on my Side,
Each beating Pulſe, and e'ry Vein ally'd.
What Feavor then has boyl'd you into Arms,
Is it **Religion**, or the **Crown** that Charms?
If a miſtaken Zeal thus puſh'd you on,
'Twas hard to ſhake my Glaſs ſo nearly done,
The ebbing Sand had little more to run.
If from my Daughter's Right your Claim you bring,
She's too too early Queen, whilſt I am King:
That

That Crime *Rome* bluſh'd to puniſh, you purſue,
Make it your Glory, and your Conſcience too.
A pious Parricide! when to your Wife
You pay a Victim of her Father's Life.
Your *Love* for *Her* appears in that to Me,
You praiſe the Fruit, and yet cut down the Tree.

K. *W.* I took but up that Crown you durſt not Wear,
And am no leſs *Your* Conquerour than Heir.
If *Right divine* does e'r to *Crowns* belong,
They loſe that *Right*, when once the *Kings* do wrong.
Them Juſtice Sacred makes, **Law** makes 'em Strong.
The Monarchy you juſtly once enjoy'd,
By the ſame Rule, as juſtly you deſtroy'd.
Titles to Crowns from civil Contracts ſpring,
And he who breaks the **Law** diſſolves the King.
Nor can you here a *Parent's Right* pretend,
Since *Publick Safety* knows *no Private* Friend.
Thus gen'rous *Pompey* for his Country drew,
Forgot his *Julia*, and her *Cæſar* too.

K. *J.* New Titles may be Scaffolded with *Laws*;
And Frothy Monarchs, of the Mobbs applauſe,
Take up a Crown, on terms too mean to wear,
Then Boaſt themſelves to be the Peoples Heir:
But

But they who Crowns from Contracts do receive,
Are Kings at Will, and govern but by *Leave*:
A Marble *Cæsar* pinnion'd to a Throne,
The People regnant, and the Monarch Stone.

K. *W.* When *Free-born Men* (by Providence design'd
Both to preserve, and propagate their Kind)
Did first their Brutish Appetites pursue,
And Force alone was all the *Law* they knew;
When *Sense* was Guardian, and when *Reason* Young,
'Twas then the Weak submitted to the Strong.
Then, as the Bull walks Monarch of the Ground,
So *Nimrod*, *Cyrus*, and the Rest were Crown'd:
For he who cou'd *Protect*, and Conquest bring,
Was from a Captain *ripen'd* to a *King*.
Thus they the Peoples *Safety* made their Choice,
And Heav'n confirm'd it by the Peoples Voice.
When you to *France* and Priests the *Laws* betray'd,
The injur'd Nation call'd me to their Aid;
And in their *Choice* the noblest Title brings,
For Subjects are the surest Guard of Kings.

FINIS.